

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 131436Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7218

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2237

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LE US SY

SUBJ: LEBANON

REF: STATE 088187

1. ON RECEIPT REFTEL I AGAIN CONTACTED SHIHABI'S OFFICE TO REQUEST MEETING WITH THE GENERAL. UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO CONTRARY, I PROPOSE WAIT OUT APRIL 13 IN HOPES OF GETTING MEETING WITH SHIHABI. IF UNSUCCESSFUL, WILL SEE DAOUDI APRIL 14 TO MAKE PRESENTATION.
2. WE HAVE HAD NO INFORMATION OF ANY MAJOR BORDER CROSSING BY SYRIAN FORCES SINCE THE NIGHT OF APRIL 10-11. ASAD'S SPEECH LATE YESTERDAY UNDERLINED HIS DETERMINATION BRING FIGHTING TO END IN LEBANON. HE RATHER EFFECTIVELY RIDICULED THE CLAIMS OF SO-CALLED REVOLUTIONARIES (I.E., JUMBLATT AND HIS SUPPORTERS, ALONG WITH LEFTIST LEBANESE ELEMENTS) WHO HE SAID HAD PRESSED SYRIA TO SANTION A LEFTIST MILITARY VICTORY.
3. ASAD MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE AMOUNTS OF ARMOR AND PERSONNEL IN POSITION ALONG THE BORDER HAVE ACCOMPLISHED HIS GOAL OF BRINGING SUFFICIENT PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON THE LEFTISTS AND THAT HE WILL NOT NEED INTRODUCE FURTHER FORCES. (BEIRUT 3259 VIVIDLY DESCRIBES A WELCOME DECREASE

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IN JUMBLATT'S BRAVADO.) HOWEVER, COMPLEX AND POSSIBLY

PROTRACTED POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS ARE AHEAD AND OUR NEW MESSAGE IS WELL TIMED.

4. SAW FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS YESTERDAY; HE HAS PROMISED CONTACT ME APRIL 14 TO DISCUSS GORSE MEETINGS HERE. WHILE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROUILLON IS INTELLIGENT AND PERSONALLY FRIENDLY, HE HAS NOT HESITATED IN PAST TO SCORE POINTS OFF US MIDDLE EAST POLICY WITH SYRIANS. I WILL WATCH FOR ANY HINT THAT GORSE LABELED US RATHER THAN ISRAEL AS OPPONENT OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION.

5. CONCERNING THE AMOUNT OF FORCE SYRIANS HAVE INTRODUCED, WE STILL SEEM TO BE GETTING CONFLICTING REPORTS FROM ISRAELI AND LEBANESE SOURCES. I HOPE MY SUGGESTION IN PARA FIVE OF DAMASCUS 2219 YESTERDAY DID NOT STRIKE YOU AS FLIP. I IN NO WAY UNDERESTIMATE HOW SERIOUSLY THE ISRAELIS LOOK ON SYRIAN INTERVENTION AND WANTED ONLY TO SUGGEST IT COULD BE USEFUL TO KEEP CHALLENGING NOT ONLY THEIR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SYRIAN INTENTIONS IN LEBANON BUT THE ACTUAL TYPE AND QUANTITY OF FORCES THEY CONSIDER HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED.

7. FINALLY, GIVEN THE PARTICULARLY STRONG DISTRUST WITH WHICH SYRIANS REGARD JUMBLATT, AND THE FACT THEY SURELY HAVE THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ABOUT OUR CONTACTS WITH HIM, I HOPE I MAY BE AUTHORIZED TO SHARE A FULLER REPORT WITH DAOUDI ABOUT DEAN'S CONVERSATIONS. (TO DATE I HAVE CONVEYED TO DAOUDI ONLY THE BARE BONES OF DEAN'S OWN PRESENTATION TO JUMBLATT AS INSTRUCTED IN PARA 1 STATE 87620.)  
MURPHY

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